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ABSTRACT

This special serial issue discusses a controversial article on university school-administration programs. The issue opens with an abridged edition of the article written for the "Phi Delta Kappan" which argues that what little evidence there is on educational administration graduate programs' efficacy indicates that such training is ineffectual. The article focuses on whether graduate training improves principal performance and whether principals even need graduate training. Responses to the article immediately follow and encompass a wide range of opinions. The first response states that the university training of school leaders is not the only option and that graduates of such programs enter with low expectations anyway and are not surprised to learn that their training lacks application to school leadership. The next article continues this vein, stating that the bashing of educational-administration programs is an old sport and that the idea that administrative work should relate to school outcomes is not new. It asserts that professors of educational administration should connect the preparation of school leaders to the practice of school leadership. Other responses focus on variables beyond the control of education professors, as well as those they do control, weaknesses in the research driving the critique, and suggested directions for future preparation courses. (RJM)

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The AASA Professor

RESEARCH AND BEST PRACTICES THAT ADVANCE THE PROFESSION OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Summer 1998 Volume 22, No. 1

Message from the Editor

Are the Training Programs of School Administrators Effective?

This Special Edition of *The AASA Professor* is being distributed to all members of AASA and all professors of pre K-12 school administration because there is a widely held view and empirical evidence that the training programs provided by universities for students preparing for careers in school administration are not effective. In the November 1997 edition of the *Phi Delta Kappan*, Haller, Brent, and McNamara wrote an article entitled, "Does Graduate Training in Educational Administration Improve America's Schools?" This special edition is a response to that article.

For the reader who did not see the original article, we asked Brent and Haller to write an abridged edition of the original article for inclusion as the first article in this issue. We then asked a number of prominent scholars and practitioners in the field of school administration to respond to the Brent, Haller article and to offer comments and suggestions for improving the training programs of school administrators.

We hope that these articles will stimulate further interest in this important topic, and that university professors and practicing school administrators will continue the dialog. Many suggestions for improving the training programs have been forwarded. We hope that many of these suggestions are considered and placed into practice. Readers are encouraged to comment on these articles. Some of these comments will be published in future editions of *The AASA Professor*.

Thank you for your participation in this discussion.

Frederick L. Dembowski, Editor
The AASA Professor

Who Really Benefits From Graduate Training in Educational Administration?

Prompting the Debate

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University of Rochester

Emil J. Haller
Cornell University

Graduate training in educational administration is expensive. It is expensive for the individual that pursues the degree and the society that supplements the costs. The costs born by the individual not only include readily identifiable expenses (e.g. tuition, books, supplies, and transportation), but additionally, the often obscured non-pecuniary costs imposed on a family when one of its members enrolls in graduate school. While direct expenses are dependent upon enrollment status and institutional type, and non-pecuniary costs are difficult to quantify, the magnitude of the costs borne by the candidate should not be underestimated.

Similarly, there are costs to the society that mandates preparation programs for administrators. For example, with increasing frequency districts support the tuition costs of candidates enrolled in education administration programs. When this occurs, candidates draw down on the limited resource pool of the districts

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that support them. In doing so, they make less likely the provision of other--perhaps more beneficial--education programs. Moreover, to the extent that tuition does not cover program costs, as is commonly the case in public universities, taxpayers subsidize graduate programs in education administration (see Monk and Brent, 1996).

There are additional costs to society that may be manifested in subtle ways. For example, the increase in the cost of entry, in both money and time, may cause the attractiveness of the profession to decline. Those who are unwilling to incur the cost of an advanced degree will take their services elsewhere. Consequently, the requirement that prospective administrators obtain graduate degrees in educational administration could decrease the quality of the applicant pool.

Acknowledging the potential costs of graduate training in educational administration prompts questions regarding the benefits produced by such training and to whom these benefits accrue. On one hand, it is probable that candidates able to secure administrative positions will find the benefits encouraging relative to the costs they are likely to face. Indeed, there is strong evidence that individuals that invest in advanced degrees will be rewarded in the form of higher earnings. One needs only to examine the salary schedules of teachers and administrators for proof of this claim. And, of course, there is the prestige that accompanies advancement to the administrative ranks.

On the other hand, society's investment in graduate training in educational administration is justified only to the extent that the benefits produced exceed associated costs. Seemingly, most education policymakers subscribe to the belief that extensive, formal training in educational administration will enable administrators to manage school facilities, teachers, and students more effectively. Nowhere is the supposition of the efficacy of graduate training more clearly evidenced than in state requirements for principal certification. In 1997, forty-five states required prospective principals to obtain at least a master's degree (or equivalent course work) prior to appointment (Tryneski, 1997). Professional associations have also called for considerable increases in the training required for a license to practice. For instance, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) has recommended that building-level administrators be required to hold a doctorate in school administration (NPBEA, 1989).

The fact that an advanced degree is required to administer schools, however, tells little if anything about whether the credential is truly needed to produce a given set of outcomes. Indeed, why should we believe that the best way to become a good administrator is to go to graduate school? Given the extensiveness of mandated pre-service training and the potential magnitude of its cost, it is disheartening to discover that the efficacy of graduate training in educational administration is relatively unstudied. In part, this is the result of the formidable difficulties involved. Nevertheless, the importance of the topic requires that it receive more attention than it has. The intent of this article is to provoke interest in the issue.

What Is Currently Known?

There is a dearth of evidence regarding the efficacy of graduate programs in educational administration, particularly with regard to principal training. Nevertheless, viewed broadly, there are several lines of inquiry that suggest that graduate training in educational administration does not positively effect administrator performance. First, there is some anecdotal evidence regarding the efficacy of graduate training. For instance, professors of educational administration have served as building principals in order to ascertain if they could make use of the theories and concepts taught in their courses. Succinctly, their answer was ***no*** (e.g., Hills, 1975; Cross, 1983). While findings from simple case studies are difficult to generalize, these accounts raise doubts about the usefulness of university courses for administrative practice.

A second type of evidence derives from surveys that ask practitioners to assess the value of their educational administration coursework. Here the evidence is mixed at best. For example, Maher (1987) reports that principals and central office administrators are generally dissatisfied with their graduate programs, with the former more dissatisfied than the latter. Schnur (1989) concludes that principals' level of satisfaction with their graduate training is related to their tenure: The more experience principals have, the more dissatisfied they are. Similarly, Goldman and Kempner (1988) find administrators ambivalent about their formal training, believing that certification and professional development programs are often irrelevancies.

In another survey of practitioners, and in contrast to the aforementioned studies, Wildman (1991) concludes that graduate training had positive effects on performance. Actually, what Wildman found was that there was a qualitative difference between administrators with and without doctorates. Utilizing

Leithwood's Principal Effectiveness Taxonomy, Wildman reports that non-doctorates "informed," "arranged," "answered," "implemented," and "assisted," while doctorates "led," "established," "wrote," and "created". Wildman counts this as evidence that training is beneficial. Others might disagree.

Finally, if one seeks to go beyond the inferential evidence provided by reflections of scholar-practitioners and surveys of practicing administrators, there are a few studies that directly attempt to assess the effects of graduate training on administrator performance. For example, using survey data collected by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Bauck (1987) concludes that formal education has no bearing on principal effectiveness (see also Gross and Herriot, 1965; Hemphill, Griffiths, and Fredrikesen, 1962). In a related study, Fowler (1991) used the School and Staffing Survey (SASS) to create a measure of perceived principal effectiveness (PPE). He then related PPE scores to, among other things, the level of training of principals and found that those who possessed only a B.A. degree scored higher than those who had earned either a Master's or a Doctorate. Thus, Fowler's analysis suggests that graduate training makes principals less effective.

It is no surprise that professors of educational administration believe their programs are considerably more valuable than do their former students (see Lem, 1989). Our reading of the limited literature on this subject, however, suggests that there is little evidence that graduate training increases the effectiveness of school administrators in general, and principals in particular. Given the stress that is currently being placed on extending graduate training, it is important to ascertain whether that training has the effects it is presumed to have. In what follows we take a step in that direction.

Does Graduate Training Improve Principal Performance?

In this section, we report on a series of analyses undertaken to determine the effect of graduate training in educational administration on principal performance. Rather than relying on our own conception of principal performance, this study is rooted in the effective schools research literature. That literature purports to have identified certain attributes that are characteristic of schools that successfully teach students. Although these attributes vary from study to study, a rough consensus has emerged. Effective schools are characterized by a principal who is viewed by staff as an instructional leader, a faculty that is directly involved in the school decision making process, a principal who is able to provide guidance and encouragement to staff members, an orderly and safe environment, and a staff that shares a commitment to instructional goals and procedures (Holcomb & McCue, 1991; Kelley, 1989; Levine & Lezzotte, 1990; Rowan, Bossert, & Dwyer, 1983; Persell, Cookson, & Lyons, 1982; Purkey & Smith, 1983).

What is notable about many of the attributes is that they can be directly influenced by a principal's actions. Moreover, it is also reasonable to believe that graduate training in educational administration enables principals to exercise that influence more effectively. For example, compared with an untrained administrator, a principal with formal training presumably knows better how to influence events in his or her school; is able to more effectively involve teachers in decision making; is more knowledgeable about educational processes and, hence, is able to help teachers who need assistance; is more familiar with the methods used to create an orderly school environment; and knows better how to establish a climate of shared commitment in the staff. One has only to review a handful of graduate catalogues to recognize that these are explicit goals of most educational administration programs. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that principals who have had extensive training in school administration ought to be more effective in these particular aspects of their work. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a plausible rationale for state-mandated certification that does not rest on the assumption that schools are improved when their principals take graduate courses in educational administration.

Using data from the School and Staffing Survey (1988) we specified a set of credible and reliable measures of these attributes so that we might distinguish between more and less effective schools. Our dependent variable, school effectiveness, was constructed from five indices, each representing one of the distinct aspects of school effectiveness described above. The first index, "Leader", called on teachers to rate the leadership qualities of their principal. "Policy" provided a measure of the degree to which teachers felt they had a voice in specific areas of school policy. "Help," our third index, measured the degree to which principals were able to help teachers improve their instructional practice. "Order" measured the extent to which students in a school were perceived by teachers to behave in an orderly manner. "Climate," our fifth

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and final index, measured the extent to which teachers share the same goals and objectives.

Clearly, other factors might influence principal effectiveness. To control for some of these, five covariates were constructed for use in the final stage of our analysis. These were the level of the school (e.g., elementary, middle, secondary), the size of the school, the length of a principal's tenure in the school, and the amount of administrative and teaching experience of each principal.

Our two independent variables described the amount and type of the principals' graduate training. The first independent variable was a four-level classification of the highest degree earned by the principal: bachelor's, master's, specialist, and doctorate. The second independent variable provided a three-level classification of a principal's graduate school major: educational administration, another major in education (e.g., teaching and curriculum), and a major in any subject area outside education.

With the two independent factors and five indices of the dependent variable, we used a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to assess the effect of the principal training on school effectiveness. Following the MANOVA, we entered the five covariates to help control for the possibility that they were moderating effects of principal's training.

Our analyses produced several interesting findings that are rich with policy implications for both public school systems and graduate education administration programs. First, we found that the typical principal has a master's degree and that nearly half have training beyond the master's. Almost ten percent of principals have earned doctorates. It is also worth noting that the majority of principals have completed their graduate work in educational administration rather than in another education program area or a discipline outside the field. For example, 56 percent of those with master's degrees have earned those degrees in educational administration, as have 75 percent of those with specialist certificates. Thus, not only are school principals highly trained, but they are primarily trained in the field that is believed to improve their practice--educational administration.

To determine whether graduate training in educational administration has any practical influence on principal performance, we ran a series of analyses that we will summarize briefly.[1] We first ran a MANOVA using all of the data and none of the covariates. This analysis suggested that neither the general level of principals' graduate training nor specific training in educational administration has a positive influence on our measures of school effectiveness (i.e., Leader, Policy, Help, Order, Climate). Next, we repeated the analysis entering the five covariates to determine whether a significant relationship could have been masked by the presence of other variables that moderate the effects of degree and major on our indices of school effectiveness. There was no change in our results.

In sum, our analyses suggest that graduate training in educational administration has no significant positive influence on school effectiveness. Note that we are not arguing that our five measures of principal effectiveness are exhaustive, that an effective school must necessarily evidence any of them, or that a school cannot be effective without an effective administrator. Rather, we are arguing that, on average, effective schools are more likely to have a competent principal, and that if graduate training in school administration improves competence, then the principals of those schools should, on average, be more highly trained than principals of less effective schools. This is not what we found.

Do Principals Need Graduate Training in Education Administration?

For the skeptic, the findings reported in this study will serve as fodder for the claim that graduate training in educational administration does little to improve America's schools. Suffice it to say, however, that we have not conclusively demonstrated that graduate training in educational administration has no benefits. Indeed, the difficulties of doing research on this issue are many, and this study is prey to a number of them. For example, our measures of effectiveness were drawn from a single group, teachers. While teachers are clearly in a position to make informed judgements about the effectiveness of their schools, they are not the only judges. Certainly, the opinions of district-level administrators, community members, parents, and students are relevant to debates concerning the effectiveness of principals.

Our analyses also did not capture what many argue is the most germane measure of principal effectiveness, student performance.[2] Judging from the

[1] Readers interested in more detailed descriptions of our findings are encouraged to consult the full report (Haller, Brent, and McNamara, 1994).

[2] The SASS data do not permit assessment of the effects of principal training on student competence.

inconsistent findings reported in the production function literature, however, factors that would logically exert influence on student achievement are not well understood. There is little understanding of whether student outcomes are dependent on the results of school-level decisions and processes or whether they are primarily due to students' willingness and ability to take advantage of program offerings (Hanushek, 1989; Hedges, Laine, & Greenwald, 1995). Further, there is a seemingly paradoxical body of research that shows that improvements in what most would conceive as the "quality" of educational inputs produce no positive change in student performance (e.g., Becker, 1982).

Finally, and likely to be of primary concern to readers of this discussion, we had no measures of the quality of individual graduate programs. There may well be some highly effective programs whose influences are masked by the aggregated nature of the SASS data sets. Our results do imply, however, that if such programs exist, they are neither numerous nor large enough to make their presence felt on our measure of principal performance.

This study is an early and still quite incomplete attempt to disentangle the influence of graduate training on principal performance. Indeed, analysts and policymakers should not be satisfied with any singular conception of principal effectiveness. Of course, extensions of this work to consider linkages between graduate training and expanded measures of principal effectiveness will require new and more refined data that will give researchers an unprecedented ability to control for multiple effects. Analysts should also canvass the production function research base for developments in econometric and sampling techniques that might address some of the vexing problems that have thus far clouded this line of inquiry. Notwithstanding the limitations of this and earlier studies, collectively the reported findings urge caution before we listen to those who would require that principals earn advanced degrees in educational administration.

In fact, the problem as we see it is even more fundamental and will likely persist even if the methodological difficulties that accompany this line of inquiry are addressed. It arises from our ignorance of *what* should be taught in education administration programs coupled with the possibility that each administrative experience is highly idiosyncratic and, accordingly, nothing of value can be learned from graduate study. To better see the difficulty, it is useful to draw distinction between the two views.

Consider first the possibility that there is nothing systematic or regular about a principal's duties. It is the principal's responsibility to make sense out of his or her unique reality and discover ways to carryout the charge. A principal's skills are developed largely, if not exclusively, on an individual basis. The knowledge is hard-won and not transferable. According to this view, there is nothing to be learned from the experience of others, including professors of education administration. While such a claim might seem implausible (and disheartening for educators of principals), similar debates have emerged concerning the efficacy of teacher education programs (see Hawley, 1987; Monk, 1989).

If the first view accurately portrays the underlying reality, education policymakers would be wise to rescind policies that mandate administration training for principals. If not, the result will be a never-ending stream of administrative candidates that draw down on a pool of education resources that is increasingly facing heavy demands, with no a priori reason to expect that schools will improve. It is worth noting, however, that there remains a role for centralized administration to set performance standards, monitor compliance, and structure incentives.

In sharp contrast, a second view holds that the skills required to successfully serve as principal are not idiosyncratic and sees graduate training as a means of transferring what is known about administering schools to practitioners. According to this view, graduate schools of education administration conduct research to discover what makes principals effective and disseminate the findings of their work. In contrast to the first view, there is a prominent role for central authorities to play that goes beyond setting standards and creating incentives. For instance, states can take steps toward ensuring that principals are at least made aware of the existing knowledge base by mandating graduate training in education administration.

Thus, the implications for policy making depend on view is likely to reflect reality. This is a troublesome result, since we still lack complete understanding of the influence of graduate training on principal performance. There are at least two reasons, however, for thinking that it is premature to conclude that that graduate training in educational administration has no value.

First, there may be many benefits that accrue to schools because their principal has received graduate training in education administration. They may not have been revealed by the research just reviewed, but this cannot count as proof that such benefits do not

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exist. Second, even if graduate training in education administration does not currently improve principal performance, it does not mean that programs cannot be restructured to produce benefits in the future. The practical reality is that we are deeply committed to providing educational administration training. Given this orientation, we must take every step possible to improve programs before we seriously consider dismantling them.

The study of the effectiveness of education administration programs has been a disappointing area of research that has produced a disconcerting pattern of insignificant results. There is no doubt that some will delight in highlighting these perverse findings to the disadvantage of stakeholders. And, of course, there is a potentially worrisome tendency for education critics to focus on one aspect of a phenomenon at a time. The potential for results such as these to be translated into bad policy is real indeed. These concerns underscore the importance of replicating recent study efforts before the results become the basis for policy making. Judging from the scant number of studies that have emerged in the last three decades, however, there is little reason to anticipate any large-scale attempt to disentangle the effects of graduate training in educational administration on America's schools. We can only learn from the pattern of inconsistencies that have emerged if careful analyses are undertaken and the findings reported. This may prove to be a serious limitation of this area of research, since many evaluations are likely to be conducted internally and reported in unpublished documents that programs may be unwilling to share. Indeed, it is asking a great deal of departments of education administration to conduct thoughtful studies of the effects of their programs when there is a real possibility that they have no effect at all. In any case, the burden of proof now clearly rests with those who claim that existing preservice training programs have the effects they are presumed to have, or that tinkering with delivery systems is all that is required to ensure that those effects are forthcoming. No doubt, this will prove to be a daunting task.

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University Training of School Leaders Isn't the Only Option

Joe Schneider
AASA

The Kappan headline was deliberately provocative: "Does graduate training in educational administration improve America's schools?" The article under the headline was even more provocative, particularly the authors' answer to the question: In a word, no.

The authors, Emil Haller, Brian Brent, and James McNamara essentially trashed the country's departments of educational administration. The three said in so many words that educators are wasting time and money earning degrees from these programs if what they're seeking is instruction that will improve their effectiveness as K-12 school administrators. Begs the question: Why aren't poorly served graduates of these programs lining up at their alma maters seeking tuition refunds?

For sure, no lines are forming, even at the worst institutions. Nor is the Kappan swimming in correspondence from school administrators disagreeing with the authors' condemnation of their advanced degrees.

Fact is, what Haller et al report isn't any revelation to graduates of these programs. Stating the obvious doesn't upset them. Let's face it, a lot of educators enter these programs with low expectations. They leave pleased if they manage to bond with a few professors or fellow students who have some insights to share about school leadership. And they accept their degrees with the simple hope that the title behind their names will bolster their professional credentials and, consequently, increase their future earnings. Do these graduates expect their graduate programs to make them more effective instructional leaders? Not really. Those skills are learned on the job, if at all.

The disdain school administrators have for departments of educational administration is apparent in the way they select a graduate program. The criteria are often (a) convenience, (b) cost, and (c) comfort.

Most educators want to pursue their educational administration degrees while working full time. So, convenience is important. Colleges and universities that offer off-campus courses, weekend seminars, evening classes, and now "virtual instruction" can attract graduate students.

Cost is a big consideration. And this is particularly true for the less-reputable degree programs. An EdD earned from a third-rate institution with a undistinguished department of educational administration provides its graduate with few bragging rights; consequently, the university that awards the degree ought to price it accordingly. But equally important is comfort, the feeling of self-worth many practitioners struggle to maintain when a professor challenges them to think, write, and generally behave as a learner. Without question, many graduate students in educational administration seek out degree programs that don't invade their comfort zone. And why not? If students don't prize the education they're buying, they want to put only minimal energy into mastering the material provided.

Apparently this sorry state of affairs doesn't bother a lot of universities. Too many of them treat

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their departments of educational administration as "cash cows." By maintaining a department with no more than two or three full-time professors, colleges are able to make money off their advanced-degree programs. A reasonable list of courses is offered by hiring low-paid adjunct faculty. Without question, some of these craft-knowledge experts are exceptional teachers. Certainly their war stories are frequently the best practical instruction aspiring administrators receive during their graduate programs. But academic departments that depend on adjunct faculty for the bulk of their instructional staff seldom garner respect within their own universities. That ought to be telling.

But it isn't. This sorry state of affairs doesn't bother a lot of graduate students either. Their search for a perfect balance of convenience, cost, and comfort keeps a lot of third-rate educational administration programs in business.

Trashing departments of educational administration isn't a new sport. And it isn't likely to stop any time soon. After kicking up a fuss at the outset of their article, Haller and his co-authors sign off with what sounds like a collective sigh of resignation. As the authors put it, "It is asking a great deal of departments of educational administration to conduct careful studies of the effects of their programs when there is a real possibility that they have no effect at all."

Perhaps. But departments of educational administration ignore the issue at their own peril. The nation needs--is demanding--effective instructional leaders. A growing number of superintendents are recognizing that their training hasn't prepared them for the challenges they now face. By the same token, the principals they want to recruit as instructional leaders are not coming out of their educational administration programs with the skills and content necessary to perform that role. If departments of educational administration are unable or unwilling to prepare the caliber of leadership needed for today's schools, who is going to do it?

Right now several profit-making companies are looking at the possibility of training administrators, as well as teachers. These companies sense an opportunity to step in where colleges, departments, and schools of education have failed. Universities might well be looking over their shoulders.

While they're at it, they might also take a glance at something called the Administrator Certification Coalition (ACC). Never heard of it? It's new, almost stealth-like in its approach to the problem.

The ACC is a coalition of the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. These three associations have pooled their money and their collective clout to develop a meaningful graduate program for school principals and superintendents. And they have teamed with ACT, Inc., to develop the assessment process that will certify the capabilities of the graduates of the associations' program. The curriculum will be rigorous; potential administrators looking for "comfort" will be dismayed. But it will be cost-effective and convenient, offering a mix of face-to-face seminars and virtual classrooms.

The program is being developed to stand alone. That is, the program of study could be completed and a credential awarded without university involvement. Or the three associations might well create their own university to award graduate degrees in educational administration. More likely, the administrator groups will partner with a few select universities to offer new, challenging masters' and doctorate degrees.

One thing is for sure. Haller, Brent, and McNamara got the attention of the administrator associations. They're no longer willing to stand by while colleges and universities lure graduate students into mediocre educational administration programs by offering convenient, affordable degrees with little academic rigor. If universities won't train educational administrators to improve America's schools, others must. Those others now include the three administrator associations.

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How Long?

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The Flickering Flame Flares Up

Haller, Brent, and McNamara's (1997) findings do not surprise people who study the preparation of education administrators. Their work adds yet another dimension to many criticisms of educational administration that drove the formation and work of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEA) in 1987 and the National Policy Board in Educational Administration (NPBEA). The title of Griffiths' paper said it well: *Educational Administration: Reform PDQ or RIP* (Griffiths, Stout & Forsyth, 1988). Since the PDQ languished, the RIP impends. Are the reasons for and work of the NCEEA already forgotten?

Achilles (1993, p. 27) began an earlier critique of educational administration with these snippets:

- "Most programs for training school administrators range in quality from embarrassing to disastrous" (Griffiths, 1988, p. 6, citing W. Hawley).
- "Over the past quarter of a century pre-service preparation programs for educational administration have proliferated, but their quality has deteriorated, [and] course content is often irrelevant, outdated and unchallenging" (NPBEA, 1989, pp. 9, 11).
- "The preparation of professional educational administrators is one of the weakest components of United States' education" (Guthrie, 1990, pp. 228-229).

Leaders might have shrugged off such criticisms but they were from leaders in the field. Pitner (1988), Brown, Markus, and Lucas (1988), and others have explained how little preparation programs for educational administrators addressed the perceived needs of practitioners. The RIP seems to win.

Adding Fuel to the Fire

Haller, Brent, and McNamara (1997) listed the limitations of the study and treated their data and educational administration training programs gently. Although the differences in scores by degree levels are not significant in their analyses, it IS disheartening to find that for *every* index of effective schools that they used (leader, climate, order, policy, help), the *highest* scores were indicated in the "Bachelors Not [majoring in] Education" category.

Was using the "effective schools" ideas unfair? These ideas have only been around for 20 years. Using their analyses and the work that they reviewed, Haller et al.(1997) suggested that professors of educational administration programs should show that training is worth its cost. They also asked if it is a burden to expect professors of educational administration programs to conduct "careful studies of the effects of their training programs" (p. 227). Haller et al. reviewed some literature and research pertinent to their topic, but there is a lot more to support their position (e.g., Boyan, 1981; Brown, Markus, & Lucas, 1988; Culbertson, 1990; Erickson, 1979; Haller & Knapp, 1985; McCarthy et al., 1988; McCarthy & Kuh, 1997; Pitner, 1988; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Achilles, see References). Given my frequent criticisms of preparation of educational administrators, the Haller et al. conclusions make lots of sense to me.[1]

Why is it surprising that practitioners have placed little value on their formal preparation in higher education when compared to other training modalities, such as on-the-job training (OJT) and inservice experiences? Educational Administration isn't in this situation alone. Other professionals (e.g., doctors, engineers) also report that conferences, workshops, and OJT are far more valuable to them in their work than was their formal higher-education preparation (Pitner, 1988). Culbertson (1990) identified textbooks as one reason why formal preparation may be suspect. Borrowed concepts tend to enter textbooks before they are adequately tested in school systems. The result is that such concepts may be used indefinitely in training programs even though their actual relations to school management and leadership practices remain unknown (pp. 102-103).

Areas that professors of educational administration had direct control over--research and scholarship--were not found to be in good shape either. Haller and Knapp (1985) reported that research in this field is typically conducted using questionnaires based on the perceptions of some group, (see also Haller, 1979) and not on administering schools or the outcomes of administrative effort. Most research in this field is done by graduate students for, as reported by McCarthy et al. (1988) and reaffirmed in McCarthy and Kuh (1997, p. 97), research is not a primary strength or activity of most of professors of educational administration (Knapp, 1983). Few are in the vanguard of educational change or influence policy (Ogawa,

1994). Educational administration mostly occurs in schools and the preparation does not, so rather than *teaching educational administration*, most professors teach *about it*.

Is it reasonable that schooling be connected to improvements in student achievement, behavior, character, and development? If so, by inference then, the importance and quality of graduate preparation can be measured by improved student outcomes in schooling, a step that Haller et al. (1997) suggested, but thankfully did not take. Do professors study how leaders influence schooling outcomes? Do they teach students useful ideas or concepts that have research-demonstrated relation to student improvement? (NPBEA, 1989; Culbertson, 1990).

The idea that administrative work should relate to school outcomes is not new. Bridges 1982 review of research on the "principal's role in school effectiveness" was extended by Hallinger and Heck (1996). They concluded that principals didn't much influence student outcomes: "It is interesting to note that the findings of these studies reveal either no effects or, at best, weak effects" (p. 20). Hallinger and Heck also cited Ogawa and Hart (1985) whose work showed that the "*principal variable accounted for between 2 and 8 percent of the variance in test scores*" (p. 39, emphasis added).

A non-scientific questionnaire to 74 students in Ed.D. and Ed.S. programs provided some indication of the preparation problem as related to outcomes (see Haller,1979; Achilles, 1990, 1991). The questions were (paraphrased): *What* research-based information that improves student outcomes have you been taught in your formal educational administration preparation program? Have you been taught *how* to do the item you listed?" Half (n=37) said "none." The other 37 listed 10 different items among their responses to the *what* question. The most frequently listed items were: effective schools, parent involvement, cooperative learning, multiple intelligence theory, and small classes in elementary schools. About half suggested that they had been taught *how* to do the item listed. The average years of experience as an administrator of 18 respondents who provided data were 10.8

Placed in the preceding contexts, the Haller et al. (1997) conclusions become less surprising, but more disturbing. In numerous publications Achilles (see References) has suggested reasons for the lack of connection between administrator work in schools and schooling outcomes. Slavin (1996) and Achilles and Nye (1997) suggested that federal policies and education funds should be changed to support the adoption in schools of practices that have been shown by rigorous research to improve student outcomes. It does make sense, doesn't it, that if school administrators encourage faculty in schools to use those things that research has shown will improve student outcomes, and if the faculty do those things, student outcomes should increase? If so, then here's the rub: Where do preservice and practicing educational administrators learn the research-driven steps that lead to improved student outcomes, and where do they learn how to use these research results?

Which of the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) knowledge-base domains addresses student outcomes or stresses that practitioners should use research as a basis for administering schools? What portions of the knowledge base as discussed by Hoyle (1991) relates *directly* to using in schools those things that improve student outcomes? If such information is not a part of the knowledge base taught to practitioners, is it surprising that university-based preparation of practitioners does not improve schools?

A most sobering thought is that this problem reflects not so much on administrators in schools, but upon the preparation process and, thus, upon the educational administration professoriate. Consider some issues. Research in educational administration is weak (e.g., Haller, 1979; Boyan, 1981; Haller & Knapp, 1985; Achilles, 1990, 1991); few professors do research or list it as a major strength (e.g., McCarthy et al., 1988; McCarthy & Kuh, 1997), so the knowledge base is suspect. An empirical study (Achilles, Wayson, & Lintz, 1989) found this knowledge-base issue to be true and foreshadowed Culbertson's (1990) view of texts, at least in the arena of community relations. What some 13 journal articles and texts suggested be done to improve public confidence differed ($p < .005$) from what a national study found that exemplary practitioners (n=181) actually did to achieve documented and lasting public confidence. This leads to a curious conundrum.

Professors explain how to improve schools, but seldom teach about research-based outcomes. For example, professors teach that practitioners should implement Total Quality Management (TQM), site-based management (SBM), and increase technology. They also urge educators to do action research. Only rarely, however, do professors study their own "stuff" (Hodgkinson, 1986; Keller, 1985). Research on any

shibboleth of higher education is viewed with concern, if not alarm . (Note Haller, et al. as an example).

Conclusions

Some would improve preparation for educational administrators by adding more "standards" (VanMeter & Murphy, 1997). Maybe so, but I disagree. Unless I don't understand them, I do not find a standard among those listed that relates to knowing and using what research says will work to improve schools. While president of NCPEA, I suggested that the NPBEA should advocate the use of research-based ideas to improve schooling, but the idea died for want of a second: *Does the emperor have new clothes?*

The time is long past when professors of educational administration should "connect the preparation of school leaders to the practice of school leadership" (Glasman & Glasman, 1997) and relate their teaching, research, and service to improving schooling in terms of student outcomes. Haller, Brent, and McNamara (1997) add tinder to long-smoldering ashes. With less than full-blaze exposure, as is possible in *Phi Delta Kappan*, the field might continue its Gulliver-like extinguishing of occasional flare-ups on the preparation-program landscape.[2]

Recommendations: Call a Real Fire Department

Recommendations will require more space than is available here. As a start, I suggest that if we expect graduate training in educational administration to lead to improved schools, professors must teach at least two important things: a) what research shows will improve student outcomes, and b) how practitioners can get those things into education practice. This daunting task suggests that professors must know these things, and that those in educational administration do research on the policy issues of implementation. Only then will practitioners get the job done. Let's start. Now.

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The author wishes to thank Fred Dembowski for the invitation to respond to the Haller, Brent, and McNamara (1997) material. He extends thanks to many colleagues, including faculty at Eastern Michigan University and participants at NCPEA for discussing these ideas. He also notes that "Still, my abstinence is my own."

The author further notes that he had reviewed drafts and discussed the ideas with two of the authors. The title, "How Long?", reflects Cicero's impassioned plea, "Quo usque tandem...Quam diu etiam... Quam ad finem...", in the First Oration against Cataline. Another title option was some emphasis of Griffiths' 1988 "PDQ or RIP" paper.

Endnotes

1. Although I have produced papers, articles, and chapters on ideas similar to those expressed by Haller et al., my distribution of them in ERIC, and in relatively "fugitive literature," has shielded them from the welcome scrutiny afforded Haller et al. The *Phi Delta Kappan* exposure was for them what Homer was for the original Achilles, at least in the eyes of Alexander the Great who at the tomb of Achilles was reported to have said (in Greek, of course) "Oh lucky were you, Achilles, to have had Homer to recount your deeds in epic fashion." A sampling of citations regarding my concerns is in the references. (I apologize for the long list for, as Glickman said, "Citing one's own work is a sign of intellectual impoverishment.")

2. Haller et al. presented these ideas at AERA and entered the paper into ERIC. They submitted the article to educational administration "outlets" but apparently didn't follow the party line, one must suppose.

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Is It Time for Us to Be Accountable Too?

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Are our educational administration programs making a difference on the productivity of students in our schools? Recently, a challenge was made as to whether we need graduate-level educational administration programs at all. In a study conducted by Haller, Brent, and McNamara (1997), no significant relationship was found between teachers' perception of principal effectiveness and administrator training in educational administration. Several other articles have stressed the need for reevaluating the role of graduate programs for educational administrators (Coutts, 1997; Dembowski, 1997; DeSpain, 1997; Barnett, 1992).

When we see the minimal effects of higher student achievement across the nation, we must ask ourselves whether we are making a difference or not. Are we preparing our graduates to be able to lead their schools and school districts to higher student productivity? So far, if we base our results on the real measure--student learning, we are lacking in effectiveness.

Are we, as professors of educational administration, willing to get so upset with our graduates' lack of influence that we begin to examine what impact we are having on their behavior? Just what is our mission? Is it not to increase the capacity of our graduates to be leaders of change in bringing about increased student leadership?

Professors of educational administration have given many reasons for our graduates not making the necessary difference needed. At first glance, these reasons seem legitimate. This article first addresses a few of these reasons and questions if we could impact those variables.

Second, the article addresses areas that are definitely under our control. A series of questions are provided for examining the quality of our programs.

Variables Not Under Our Control – Or Are They?

One could argue that there are far too many variables not under our control for us professors to impact our graduates to influence higher student achievement. Let's look at a few.

Current School System Administrative Leadership

Administrative leadership in many of our school systems is lacking so our graduates move into environments not conducive to change. This author's observations are that, across the nation, there are few leaders who understand how to influence change in their system, especially change toward increased student achievement. Graduates report to this author that they feel unable to carry out the ideas learned in our courses when they get into their systems because of the "way things are done here" and the expectation that they will continue the same direction.

One would have to argue, however, that most of those individuals in higher administrative positions came through our educational administration training programs. Did our programs contribute to a "status quo" mentality? Can we make a difference here?

Constituents Served

Various constituent groups are becoming more vocal in influencing what they want. Small interest groups crop up without warning moving a district from one crisis to another. The ability to stay focused on student learning is often weakened by these groups.

Can we teach graduate students how to work with such groups in a way that the focus stays on student achievement? Does all our teaching get lost in the wave of emotionality? Can we make a difference here?

Boards of Education

Board membership is often in flux with new board members coming in with new agendas, firing and hiring superintendents, and creating unrest in the community. Such unrest often influences an environment of status quo, or directions for change come too quickly.

How could we influence our graduates to be principled about change in such situations? Can we make a difference here?

Superintendent Tenure

Superintendent tenure is short, less than an average of 3 years, causing unrest in a district's direction. Such instability decreases the likelihood of a focused effort over time. On the other hand, it is often reported that senior officers at the associate and assistant level often continue "business as usual."

What impact are we having on preparing future superintendents to work more collaboratively with boards, to be teachers of board members? How are we influencing all senior officers to have a sense of continuous improvement toward increased student productivity? Can we make a difference here?

Unions and Associations

Many teacher and administrator associations and unions are typically focusing on compensation increases and, often, vigorously fighting removal of incompetent employees. Employee needs are usually seen as more important than student learning.

How do we work with our graduate students to encourage staff to grow professionally in those areas that influence student achievement? Further, how do we teach our graduates how to remove incompetent employees? Can we make a difference here?

External Mandates

Administrators frequently complain about state politics and the changes that come every few years. One mandate begins and before there is a chance to implement it, a new or revised mandate becomes law. Are we teaching our graduates how to influence state direction and how to be proactive in dealing with mandates? Can we make a difference here?

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System Planning

One of the major inhibitors to change is the planned change process in school districts (Downey, pending publication). Most planning in school systems is fragmented, isolated, and lacking in feasibility. Most systems have far too many goals to achieve all at the same time. Most of the goals have little to do with increased student achievement.

Can we teach to our graduates effective planning and understanding of the change process? Can we make a difference here?

Curriculum Design

Curriculum, in the form of precise instructional student learning, is missing in most school systems across the nation. If district's are not clear about what they expect students to learn, then how can they expect to reach their missions? Most districts rely on national or state frameworks which are, typically, goal-type statements. Without the precision of learning objectives, teachers are left to their own interpretation. The results are a curriculum that is idiosyncratic, lacking in articulation and coordination (English, 1988).

Can we play a role in this? Can we influence our graduates in insisting upon a curriculum which incorporates the best thinking in the field about its design and implementation? Can we make a difference here?

Assessment Tools

Through the Curriculum Management Audit (Frase, English, & Poston (Eds.), 1995), it has been found that school districts seldom have a comprehensive student and program assessment approach and fail to assess most of what is taught. Most school districts have a default mentality to state assessments. Further most of these assessments are norm-referenced assessments that have minimal alignment with the curriculum.

Most districts do not really know how well their students are achieving. If school systems do not have appropriate work measures, it is doubtful they will influence higher student achievement. Can we make a difference here?

Quality Control Through Alignment

If the objectives are known and there are assessments in place, then how aligned is instructional delivery? Recent examinations of alignment of the taught curriculum to the written curriculum have been dismal (English, 1992). District staffs are acknowledging that the textbooks are driving the taught curriculum in most instances and such textbooks often have a poor alignment with district or state curriculum. Can we in our educational administration programs counter this variable? Can we make a difference here?

Variables Definitely Under Our Control

At first glance, it might appear that there are many variables over which neither our graduates nor we have little, if any, control to influence higher student achievement. However, on a second look, we realize that it is our responsibility to develop in our graduates the proficiencies to work in this evolving arena.

We must make drastic changes in our efforts if we are going to help our graduates "shape the future." And, isn't this our mission? Isn't this why we exist? The following set of questions are designed to begin our dialogue as to how we can rethink our programs and be accountable to our customers--those who must lead the future.

Initial Questions to Generate Dialogue for Improvement of Educational Administration Preparation Programs

Mission and Customers

- What is our mission?
- Who are our primary customers? Are the primary customers our current and aspiring administrators as they function in our program or in their administrative jobs? How are the pre K-12 students our customers (Downey 1994)?
- What is our goal in shaping the future toward higher pre K-12 student achievement?

Mission Defined Through Program Curricula.

- What are the proficiencies needed by our graduates to lead schools and districts into a future of high student functioning both in the schools and as adults in society?
- How are our current program proficiencies aligned to the competencies needed by our graduates to lead others toward sustained change toward higher student productivity?
- Do we include in our graduate program proficiencies critical performance roles such as those identified by Shwahn and Spady (1998) as the "15 Performance Roles of a Total Leader"?

Authentic Leadership.

- Creating and sustaining a compelling personal and organizational purpose.
- Being the lead learner.
- Modeling core organizational values and personal principles.

Visionary Leadership.

- Defining and pursing a preferred organizational future.
- Consistently employing a client focus.
- Explaining organizational perspectives and options.

Cultural Leadership.

- Involving everyone in productive change.
- Developing a change-friendly culture of innovation, healthy relationships, quality, and success.
- Creating meaning for everyone.

Quality Leadership.

- Developing and empowering everyone.
- Improving the organization's performance standards and results.
- Creating and using feedback loops to improve performance.

Service Leadership.

- Supporting and managing the organization's purpose and vision.
- Restructuring to achieve intended results.
- Rewarding positive contributions to productive change.

- How do we integrate leadership competencies into the teaching of the day-to-day management operations competencies so that new administrators see new ways of carrying out their work?

Assessment of Our Program

- How do we use both formative and summative approaches to measuring our success?
- How do we measure each curriculum proficiency in an authentic manner?
- What are the rubrics to be used to determine proficiency as graduate students are in our programs?
- What are the rubrics used to determine proficiency of our graduate students on the job?

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- How do we determine our graduate students' effects on influencing others toward achieving higher student achievement?

Instructional Delivery of Our Program

- How are we integrating the knowledge base with core learning experiences such as those established in the University of Northern Colorado program (Barnett, et. al. 1992)?
  - *Understanding Self*: Developing a Personal Vision for Educational Leadership.
  - *Using Inquiry*: Framing Problems and Making Decisions in Educational Leadership.
  - *Shaping Organization*: Management and Leadership in Education.
  - *Understanding People*: Professional Development and Educational Leadership.
  - *Understanding Environment*: Social, Political, Economic, and Legal Influences.
- How are our methods of delivering our program curriculum providing for high meaning for our graduates?
- How are we providing a flexible approach to the accomplishment of the curriculum?
- How are we building the theory underlying the proficiencies into practical, real-world applications?
- How are we evaluating the delivery processes to increase their effectiveness?
- How are we diagnosing our current graduates entry-level capabilities and differentiating the instructional approach to provide a challenging learning environment for each?

Professor Competence and Professional Development

- What are the competencies needed of our professors to design and deliver our program proficiencies?
- How are our selection procedures increasing the likelihood of identifying the best candidates for delivering our evolving curriculum?
- Are we all learners and willing to develop new approaches and an evolving curriculum to meet and exceed the needs of our graduates?
- What expectations and opportunities are there for our professional development?
- How do we insist on quality professor leadership and deal with marginal instructors?
- How do each of us hold ourselves personally responsible for the achievement of our graduate students and, in turn, the achievement of pre K-12 students?

Visioning for the Future

- What procedures do we have in place to constantly use assessment data to improve our program efforts?
- Do we have a vision in place as to how we will be different five years from now in terms of program design and delivery?
- Do we revisit our vision annually and evolve it further?

Summary

These are just some of the initial questions that we can use to help us rethink our programs for preparing current and aspiring educational administrators. It is hoped that this starter list will generate many more important questions as we attempt to better meet the needs of our graduates in their quest for higher student productivity.

Can we make a difference? *Absolutely*. However, it will take a major rethinking about our purpose and our work. To do this, we must be clear about what our mission is and accountable to its achievement. If we are not able to influence those who lead school systems in order to bring about higher student achievement, we should not exist.

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Leader Preparation: A Reflection and Response to the Haller Article

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The Haller, Brent, and McNamara study reported in *Phi Delta Kappan* stirred me to reflect on the nature of leader preparation in the university. While there are weaknesses in the research these authors report, the article does provide an opportunity to explore what I consider to be the critical issues in preparing school leaders. I address a couple of the key weaknesses in the Haller et al. research and then argue some of the issues regarding leader preparation that may be worth considering.

First limitation

The authors make global claims that their particular study–a single study-shows that graduate education for school administrators makes no difference in the effectiveness of subsequent practice for these graduates. Such causal claims are difficult to establish even with a sound, defensible definition of school effectiveness assessed with valid and reliable measures of that effectiveness. The Haller et al. study uses teacher report data as the independent variables with no other objective measures. This, in itself, suggests that any findings should be viewed with caution. I find it interesting that the authors consistently use the term school *managers* rather than school *leaders*.

Second limitation

My most serious criticism of this study is that the authors' use data from the Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) for the 1987-1988 school year. The data were collected prior to the major thrust of the reform movement in educational administration preparation. The National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration was formed in 1985. Its reform-minded report, *Leaders for American Schools*, was published in 1988. Only after the publication of the report did most programs in educational administration commit to intense reform of their leader/principal preparation programs nationwide. This study does not address the impact of that reform movement in any way.

The Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (1988) forced programs at institutions of higher education to consider some key questions: (1) How should principals impact schools leading into the 21st century? (2) What do school leaders need to know and be able to do to make schools effective in the 21st century? We had not begun to address these questions in program reform when the data were collected for this particular study. However, studies like those of Haller et al., provide us with the opportunity to reflect on these questions. In that sense, the Haller, Brent, and McNamara study is an opportunity.

Opportunity to Reconsider Leader Preparation

There are some things we do know about leadership, especially leadership in the 21st century. Projections regarding the work of 21st century school leaders suggest that interacting trends will require that leaders anticipate future developments and build the capacity of schools to become learning communities. Leadership must become oriented to

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building learning communities with a focus on shared values and productive work cultures. Roles and competencies are clearly evolving and call for a concomitant evolution in the image of leader preparation. Murphy (1993) suggests that leaders for the 21st century must become moral agents, educators, inquirers, and students of the human condition. Leaders must focus on student learning and on teaching. Leaders must operate on a set of moral imperatives. Leaders must demonstrate passion for people.

In our leader preparation program at the University of Missouri-Columbia, we have explored what schools of the 21st century will look like, as well as the requisite "knows" and "be able to dos" that will be required of principals who will provide leadership for effective schools. The central issue becomes: How graduate study will provide the "knows" and "be able to dos" for leadership in the 21st century. This is the more important debate. The other study looks back, not forward.

We discovered that principal preparation must focus on the following dimensions of leadership:

- *Unity of purpose*: Effective leaders develop with all stakeholders unity of purpose that keeps the school focused on student learning.
- *Empowerment*: Effective leaders create empowering environments that support innovation, involvement in decision making, continued professional development, and the capacity to solve problems.
- *Organizational management*: Effective leaders utilize the principles and practices of effective organizational management to support the continual improvement of the school's culture.
- *Learners and learning*: Effective leaders facilitate the application of current knowledge in learning and human development.
- *Curriculum and instruction*: Effective leaders understand the relationships among curriculum coherence, student success, and pedagogical leadership that keeps the school focused on student learning.
- *Culture*: Effective leaders engage all stakeholders in the creation of a caring, safe community that values self-motivation, active inquiry, and positive social interaction.
- *Assessment*: Effective leaders facilitate the use of a variety of strategies through which student performance and continuous learner development is monitored.
- *Diversity*: Effective leaders create an environment in which the ethical and moral imperatives of schooling in a democratic society are valued.
- *Professional development*: Effective leaders are life-long learners who demonstrate commitment to their professional development and renewal.
- *Reflection*: Effective leaders reflect on practices, evaluate results, and modify future practices.
- *Inquiry*: Effective leaders create an environment in which inquiry informs the continual improvement of the organization.
- *Professionalism*: Effective leaders demonstrate ethical and moral leadership and a commitment to the development of the profession.

The Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (1988) concluded that traditional preparation programs were marked by lack of a definition of good leadership; lack of collaboration between school districts and universities; and, especially, a lack of sequence, modern content, and clinical experiences. Upon reflection, I do believe that we are still missing some key ingredients in leader preparation reform if we are to be able to show relationships between leader preparation and school effectiveness. I will focus briefly on two of these missing key ingredients that may have the most impact on future school leaders' effectiveness: (1) practice-preparation linkages, and (2) a conception of teaching and learning.

Practice-Preparation Linkage

Glasman (1997), in the theme issue of the *Peabody Journal of Education* on leader preparation, puts forth a strong argument for a practice-preparation linkage. One of the linkages between leader behavior and training focuses on problem solving. We know that one of the vehicles for instruction in problem solving is clinical and internship experiences. Yet, creating exemplary clinical and internship experiences in leader preparation programs is our least effective reform. It may be that we will not realize the practice-preparation linkage until we create truly exceptional

clinical and internship components in our programs (Short & Price, 1992). Kruger and Milstein (1995) report the results of a 10-year summative evaluation of the program at the University of New Mexico where reforms were first implemented in 1985. That study revealed that graduates who were then practicing administrators viewed the clinical experiences as the important part of their preparation and their subsequent leadership practices.

Conception of Teaching and Learning

Block (1997) has suggested that a missing link in school leader effectiveness is a clear understanding and conception of the core technology of schools – an image of teaching and learning process. Block (p. 169) suggests that "At heart of school culture are not only a certain set of technical matters that affect the teachers' skill in teaching all learners on a more proximal basis, but also a set of moral matters that affect the will to hold the course more distally." Furthermore, these skills intersect so that faculty "not only tend to believe in what they do but they also tend to do what they believe" (p. 169). Block posits "it is these images that educational leaders more often than not must move with their own learning-teaching images to generate best value for their students" (p. 169).

These two key issues regarding the way we prepare school leaders are worth a second look. We must ensure that future leaders' preparation programs provide them with the knowledge (to know) and skills (to be able to do) to impact the effectiveness of a school in helping students learn. If we attend to the practice-preparation linkage (especially through clinical and internship experiences) and to the leader image of teaching and learning, perhaps future studies such as those of Haller et al., will report a significant relationship between a school leader's graduate preparation and subsequent impact on school effectiveness.

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What Should We Do Now? Suggested Directions for School Administration Programs

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This special issue of *The AASA Professor* has been sent to all members of AASA, and to all professors of educational administration who are members of UCEA or NCPEA, in order to promote continuing discussion between professors of educational administration, practicing school administrators, and the educational administration professional associations. Each of the articles present particular viewpoints, but all of the articles agree that change is needed in the profession of educational administration. There are many suggestions for improvements in administrative practices, university training programs, and research efforts. Improvements in all three areas are needed. My comments will span all three of these areas, with emphasis on what needs to be done with training programs in educational administration.

The Brent and Haller research study has a focus on the characteristics of effective schools. The study is most useful in placing a spotlight on the efficacy

of educational administration programs, indicating that there are major problems that need to be addressed. Indeed, their seminal article provided the impetus for this special edition. The authors indicate that their analysis does not use measures of student performance. The most closely related measure used in the study is: Are the students orderly? While this is one outcome-based measure, there are other more relevant measures. This is a basic flaw in their study that they recognize in their research report.

However, this flaw leads to some more fundamental questions regarding the research on effective schools. First, what schools are, in fact, effective? There are several research approaches to measure effectiveness: input-based, process-based, and outcome-based. Simply put, what are the right resources, goods, and services (inputs) needed by an educational organization in order to promote achievement? What are the best teaching and administrative methodologies (processes) needed to promote achievement? What are the appropriate achievement outcomes that should be measured if an educational organization is to be called "effective"? Studies are needed using all of these approaches in order to fully understand the educational process. Then, further analysis is required to examine the interaction of these approaches. For example, here are some questions that should be considered: What are the appropriate goals of education? What are educational outcomes that could be measured to determine if these goals have been achieved? What are the best instructional methods to achieve these outcomes? What is the best way to deliver this instructional process--with what mix of resources?

Many of the studies based on effective schools are asking the wrong questions. For example, they do not ask the following: Are the students in the schools studied in fact high achievers? Are there real gains in achievement? Or did the students come in with high achievement potential to begin with? Why are most effective schools in relatively wealthy areas? Are we, in fact, rewarding and emulating those school administrators who are bringing about the least amount of real gains in students' achievement but who are getting the most publicity because their students are smart and rich?

The research needed to accurately measure instructional effectiveness requires that pre- and post-testing be conducted to determine gains in achievement, and then use the measured gains in achievement to test the efficacy of instructional methodologies and administrative practices. This is very difficult to do. More input-, process-, and outcome-based research with a focus on student achievement is clearly needed. Until it is determined what are the most effective teaching methods, it is difficult to determine what administrative tasks and functions best promote effective teaching and learning.

Brent and Haller advise caution before listening to those who would require principals to receive an advanced degree in educational administration. This is "throwing out the baby with the bath water!" All educational administration programs teach something. It just is not the knowledge and skills required to achieve gains in the measures of effectiveness used in these studies. The authors posit that there is nothing regular or systematic regarding a principal's duties. That statement is only partially true for the following reasons.

First, every principal has some basic instructional-related and administrative-related duties and responsibilities that must be conducted. However, I believe that there is confusion in the role of the principal: Should a principal be an instructional leader or a manager? For example, I believe that there is an over-emphasis on instructional leadership and an under-emphasis on management related tasks and functions(see Dembowski, 1998). How can practitioners, researchers, and academics support leadership and denigrate management until they fully understand which facets of leadership and management tasks are related to effective teaching and learning? While I admit that I do not fully understand the relationship between management functions and learning, I can offer volumes of evidence regarding the relationship between management practices and outcomes in the private sector. Just look at any management textbook in an MBA program. The relevant research questions here are: What are the appropriate duties and responsibilities of a school administrator, and Have administrators received adequate training in their conduct?

Second, in every educational situation, there are unique needs and circumstances. Does the principal have the necessary skills to assess the situation, determine what is needed, implement changes needed to solve the problems faced, and to evaluate whether these changes were effective and the problem solved? Again, these are basic management skills (assessment, decision-making and evaluation) that every educational administration training program should address.

If educational training programs were eliminated, as Brent and Haller suggest as one possible solution, what would be put in their place? Perhaps educational administrators *should* go through an MBA program. Perhaps they could simply get advanced training in the various subject content areas, and become "master instructors". I believe that eliminating educational administration programs is unnecessary, but the changes in the program suggested above are warranted. Even if all of the suggestions above were implemented, there are other barriers to educational administration program effectiveness. Here some additional problem areas that should be addressed.

Many students come into a training program in educational administration with a subject matter master's (required to obtain permanent teaching certification) and want to become an administrator (obtain administrative certification), but they want to take the minimum amount of coursework necessary. This is a reasonable request on their part. As Brent and Haller point out, the coursework is very costly to these students. Most school districts do not pay for the coursework, and the burden of cost is borne by the student. These students are independent. Usually their parents do not pay for the cost, as with undergraduate students. They are usually married and are supporting their own household. They cannot afford the cost because their teacher salary is not very large (this may no longer be true!). The result of this economic pressure is that they want to take the minimum amount of coursework needed to obtain the necessary credential. The minimum is usually about 30 hours of graduate course credits. Many programs allow students to transfer in some credits from their earlier coursework, so many students only take 18-24 hours plus credits for the internship. This amounts to 6 or 7 courses. What are the right courses and what skills are taught in these courses? They have to be chosen very carefully.

Many programs have required courses, such as statistics. How does knowledge of statistics promote learning in elementary and secondary students? Every required course eliminates the opportunity for the student to take another more relevant course. Note, I am not saying that knowledge of statistics is irrelevant; I am saying that there may be more appropriate and necessary coursework to meet that particular student's professional development needs. Educational administration programs should take a careful look at their coursework to determine if the mix of courses required of their students is appropriate. This will be difficult until the relationships between administrative practice and learning effectiveness are clarified.

Often, there is a great amount of flexibility built into programs of study in educational administration. This allows the faculty advisors to design a program of study tailored to meet an individual student's need. However, too often that flexibility is abused. Students want previous coursework they took to meet another need to count in their educational administration program. Students also pick courses that meet their scheduling needs, taking courses that meet on a day and time that is convenient. In addition, students take courses that they perceive are easier or are taught by a professor that requires less work. All of these practices reduce the opportunity to take more relevant coursework.

Many departments of educational administration have political realities that results in an inappropriate mix of coursework required of their students. Faculty members often have specializations that may be inappropriate for the students, but these faculty members have to teach something to justify their salary, so their courses are required or are offered in the place of more relevant coursework. These faculty may be unwilling to retool themselves or to take the effort to teach coursework more relevant to student and professional needs. The curriculum of many departments of educational administration is *faculty-need* driven instead of *student-need* driven. This is a prevailing problem and needs to be changed. Great care must be taken in the hiring of new professors of educational administration. The professors should be hired to fit the curriculum, not the other way around!

Another difficulty faced by many departments of educational administration is that the university rewards for excellence focus on research and publication, and not on teaching and service. Recent recommendations from the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, and the National Policy Board in Educational Administration, both referenced in the previous articles, highlight the need for a strong internship or apprenticeship. However, these activities are very labor intensive, and, if conducted properly, reduce the time available to conduct research and work on publications. The result is that professors who work on these types of activities are not rewarded to the extent that the more traditional research-oriented faculty is. In fact, their job security may be

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threatened in the tenure decision because of the lack of articles. Deans of Schools of Education and Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs must realize these realities and make provisions to protect and nurture professors who provide these necessary services.

State education departments and professional associations have an important role to play in determining the curriculum of these training programs. Standards, such as the ISLLC standards discussed in the previous articles, should be uniformly adopted by all states in the certification requirements. Structured programs of study containing units of instruction in specified skill areas should be adopted by all departments of educational administration and should be required of all students. Educational administration professionals, including professors, practicing administrators, and the professional associations should cooperatively develop model curricular guides and instructional materials. Supervised internships should be developed which have required experiences in all of the specified skill areas. No student should be granted certification until all skill areas are mastered. The professional associations should strive to embrace the professors, and to recognize what the professors' needs are (i.e. publishing, doing presentations, etc.), and how the association can address these needs. The associations should establish Higher Educational Advisory Committees, consisting of full- and part-time faculty, practicing school administrators who serve as adjunct faculty, and other representatives of the association, to discuss what strategies of cooperation would be mutually beneficial to all parties.

There should be regular communication between professors of educational administration and practicing administrators (alumni) to review and adjust curricular offerings. Advisory committees should be established for this purpose. Local school administrators should begin an ongoing dialog with the university professors and university administrators to ensure the curriculums are relevant, current, and meet the needs of the local educational administration community.

A mix of regular, full-time, and part-time adjunct faculty is also useful in balancing the theoretical and practical aspects of the program. Many universities are making a distinction between the research faculty and the field-oriented professional school faculty. Just as medical schools employ practicing specialists to teach specific coursework, perhaps departments of educational administration should employ practicing school administrators to teach specific courses in very specialized areas (and pay them well to do so!).

Most departments of educational administration have addressed some of these issues. All departments should address all of these issues. I believe that professors in educational administration programs are hard working and well-intentioned professionals. However, they teach what they have been trained to teach and what they have experienced. Their training programs have been flawed, and they have not been taught to teach "the right stuff". Great care should be taken in the future to select individuals who are well trained, flexible, adaptable, and willing to work with their professional associations and colleagues in the field to improve the training programs in educational administration.

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